Soldiers' and Sailors' Historical Society
OF RHODE ISLAND.

PERSONAL NARRATIVES:

Fourth Series, No. 14.

RECOLLECTIONS

OF THE

UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY.

BY JOHN C. PEGRAM,

[Late Ensign, United States Navy.]



PERSONAL NARRATIVES

OF EVENTS IN THE

WAR OF THE REBELLION,

BEING PAPERS READ BEFORE THE

RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

FOURTH SERIES - No. 14.

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MR. PRESIDENT: I have been honored by an invitation to re-read to you a paper prepared over a year ago and read at a meeting of the Rhode Island Historical Society, and I have accepted the invitation with some reluctance, for the reason that while the events which my paper attempted to chronicle constituted a not unimportant chapter in the history of Rhode Island, which is the special care of that Society, they hardly rank with the "moving accidents by flood and field," the "hair-breadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach," the "being taken by the insolent foe," which it is the special function of this Society to perpetuate. Yet, considering that my subject was part of the history of the war, as well

as part of the history of Rhode Island, and remembering that Rhode Island volunteers were among the first who marched to the defence of the capital, and by way of Annapolis, I have thought that it might not prove uninteresting to your Society to hear some account of the history of the United States Naval Academy and of its removal from Annapolis in 1861 to Newport in this State, where it has left behind it the United States Torpedo Station for experiments in offensive and defensive devices and the study of explosives, conducted by graduates of the Naval Academy; the headquarters of the Naval Training Squadron and the War College, all three of which may be properly considered as legitimate consequences of the temporary residence of the Naval Academy at Newport from 1861 to 1865. And all of them probable progenitors of important forces, mental, material and personal, in any future war in which our country may become involved.

The main interest attaching to the removal of the school from Annapolis to Newport at the outbreak of the Civil War, viewed from the standpoint of a Soldiers and Sailors Historical Society, it seems to

me, is that by the transfer this national institution for the training of naval officers was saved to the Union, with its routine and its traditions unimpaired. It was, so to speak, in imminent danger of dissolution at Annapolis, in the spring of 1861. The latitude and the moral atmosphere plainly did not agree with it. Change of air and scene to the more wholesome Aquidneck braced up its drooping energies, gave it time and opportunity to gather strength and tone, and then, the proper conditions having been restored, when the microbes of secession had been exterminated for all time by the searching and efficacious fumigation of the smoke of battle, the old Academy went back to its old place stronger and healthier than ever. A second result of the removal of great importance in the conduct of the earlier operations of the war was that it left ready for immediate use a first-rate rendezvous for troops at a convenient point, already fitted with buildings and other appliances for instant occupation. In fact, it would have been difficult at the time to find anything like so suitable a place for the assembling and fitting out of one of the most important, successful and far-reaching in result of these earlier operations of the army and navy. I mean the "Burnside Expedition," as it came to be called, which took its departure for the Carolina coast from the deserted Naval Academy at Annapolis.

This consideration is, however, distinctly secondary, for while such a rendezvous proved convenient, it would not have been indispensable. Others could have been improvised and made to serve the temporary purpose. But had the well-established and thoroughly organized school, the result of nearly twenty years of intelligent and zealous effort, been disintegrated and discontinued, I think the government would have suffered a greater permanent injury to its future, through such a loss to its navy, than can be measured in terms of a campaign lost or won.

As long ago as the very opening years of this century, Alexander Hamilton, whose capacious intellect and marvellous genius for administration seemed to embrace and thoroughly comprehend everything bearing upon the science of government and statecraft, recommended a school for the instruction of naval officers, and had his suggestion been carried out by

Congress the United States Naval Academy and the West Point Military School would have been twins, instead of differing more than the measure of a generation in age. It is true that at Norfolk and Philadelphia and on board some of the larger vessels there were scattered attempts at teaching the young officers the theory as well as the practice of their profession. A few officials, called Professors of Mathematics, were regularly appointed and borne on the navy reg-They were assigned to duty sometimes on ister. board ship and sometimes at shore stations, and a few midshipmen at a time would have the opportunity of profiting by such instruction as these professors were competent to impart, but there was no comprehensive or connected system about it, and those who can remember or who have read what sort of an animal the midshipman of more than fifty years ago was, can easily imagine that the cause of education among them, under the circumstances, had a mighty slim chance. Sent to sea anywhere from ten to fifteen years old, removed from parental or other home influences for good, exposed to most of the evil influences and temptations, and often the black

sheep of the family, with whom nothing could be done at home, and so sent into the navy to be got rid of, the only wonder is that out of such material and with such limited instrumentalities for culture in anything but seamanship, gunnery and navigation there should have been developed such accomplished officers as some of those who ante-date the inception of the Academy at Annapolis. Every American is proud of such splendid characters as DuPont, Farragut, Dahlgren, Rowan, Drayton, Simpson, Luce, the Rodgers, and many others of our own times, not to mention the elder worthies. Not only magnificent fighters and thorough seamen, with all the pluck and dash of the rough old sea dogs of the Ben-Bow type, but cultivated gentlemen as well, and filling in full measure the whole meaning of Chaucer's lines:

> "He never yet ne villenye ne said, In all hys lyf unto ne maner wight He was a very parfait, gentil knyghte."

But ah! We do not hear so much about the hundreds of brave young lads who went first to sea—and then to—"Davy Jones's locker," ruined by bad

examples, bad habits, and lack of youthful moral training.

Capt William H. Parker, formerly of the navy, in his charming little book, called *Recollections of a Naval Officer*, speaking of the service fifty years ago, says: "The navy at that day was, as to officers and men, very similar to the British navy as described by Marryatt in his novels."

To those who have gloated in their younger days over the Adventures of Peter Simple and Mr. Midshipman Easy, Frank Mildmay, or the Naval Officer, and others of the captivating "yarns" of this prolific writer, it is superfluous to suggest that an occasional recitation at the Naval Asylum or on board ship, and the practical professional instruction, "picked up," as it were, went a very little way towards educating the future admirals of the American Navy.

Subsequently to the suggestion of Hamilton before mentioned (which was first made in a letter to Ex-President Washington shortly before his death and afterwards communicated to Congress), other wise and sagacious statesmen from time to time during the first half of the present century urged upon Congress the establishment of a permanent and properly organized national school for the training of young officers. The latest serious effort to induce Congress to make provision for such a scheme found expression in a Committee report by Senator Bayard of Delaware to the Senate in 1845 upon this subject. In that report the Senator uses the following language:

"Under existing laws, appointments of Midshipmen are made by the Secretary of the Navy, and are for the most part the result of personal or political influence. Instances have occurred in which boys who have been thought good for nothing else, have yet been thought good enough for a service which in its perils and its responsibilities requires high qualities of physical and intellectual vigor as well as moral worth. His scientific instruction commences at sea or in a foreign port, amidst the noise and distraction of a crowded ship and the interruptions of the various calls of duty. Having been five years in the service, three of which have been passed at sea, the midshipman may be examined for promotion. To prepare for this examina-

tion he spends a few months at the Naval Asylum in Philadelphia, where a school has been established for the purpose. This meagre course of instruction furnishes the sum of his attainments. Such are the provisions for the training of this important branch of officers."

But Congress has always until quite lately been pachydermatous to any attempt at forcing it to make appropriations for strengthening the navy or making it more efficient, and the repeated efforts to arouse it to the importance of suitable "provision for the training of this important branch of officers" again came to naught, and such provision might doubtless have been indefinitely deferred, but on March 4, 1845, the lately deceased venerable and venerated historian, George Bancroft, became Secretary of the Navy in the cabinet of President Polk. He was then in the prime of his manhood, had had some experience as an educator, and was deeply interested in the project of a regular naval academy. He conceived a plan for such an establishment, searched the laws relating to the navy, and convinced himself that his plan did not conflict with such laws. He consulted with the Secretary of War, Hon. W. L. Marcy, with General Scott and others, and finally, with their concurrence, selected Fort Severn, Annapolis, Md., an old redoubt of little value for coast defence at the mouth of the Severn River, as a site for the school, procured its transfer from the War to the Navy Department, and then made choice of Commander Franklin Buchanan, an accomplished officer, not then more than thirty years of age (who afterwards commanded the famous ram Merrimac in the great battle of Hampton Roads), as the first Superintendent of the school, and entrusted to him the task of organization in a letter, which is too long to quote here in full, but commencing as follows:

NAVY DEPARTMENT, Aug. 7, 1845.

SIR: The Secretary of War, with the consent of the President, is prepared to transfer Fort Severn to the Navy Department, for the purpose of establishing there a school for midshipmen.

In carrying this design into effect it is my desire to avoid all unnecessary expense, to incur no charge that may demand new annual appropriations, but by a more wise application of moneys already appropriated and officers already authorized to provide for the better education of the young officers of the navy. It is my design not to create new officers, but by econ-

omy of administration to give vigor of action to those which at present are available; not to invoke new legislation, but to execute more effectually existing laws. Placed by their profession in connection with the world, visiting in their career of service every climate and every leading people, the officers of the American Navy, if they gain but opportunity for scientific instruction, may make themselves as distinguished for culture as they have been for gallant conduct.

"To this end it is proposed to collect the midshipmen who from time to time are on shore and give them occupation during their stay on land in the study of mathematics, nautical astronomy, theory of morals, international law, gunnery, use of steam, the Spanish and French languages, and other branches essential in the present day to the accomplishment of a naval officer."

Acting in pursuance of the Secretary's instructions, Commander Buchanan organized the school, and it was formally opened October 10, 1845, with about forty midshipmen, most of whom were there to be examined, after five years' service, for promotion. This was the beginning, in a small way, of what has grown to be a large, admirably equipped and thoroughly organized institution for technical instruction. It began to find favor with Congress. The laws were modified to meet the new order of things.

The scope of the school was gradually extended in every way. Instead of sending youngsters to sea as midshipmen, in a little while youths from fourteen to eighteen years of age were appointed acting midshipmen, and after a careful preliminary examination, both physical and mental, were admitted to a four years' course of instruction, and those who passed successfully at the end of that time received their warrants as midshipmen in the navy, and began their career thoroughly educated for their profession and with a fairly complete equipment outside of merely technical learning.

In 1860, the year next prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, the United States Naval Academy had for some time been organized and established. For about a dozen years classes of men who had gone through the four years' course had graduated and entered the service. And the earlier dates had risen to such positions as enabled them to show the advantages of systematic training as compared with the old hap-hazard methods of instruction.

In September, 1860, with over one hundred more or less unsophisticated young men from all over the country, holding appointments from the Secretary of the Navy for the purpose, I reported at the office of the Superintendent of the Naval Academy at Annapolis for examination. To this very hour I can feel the anxiety I then experienced over the question whether I should be able to fulfill successfully the long list of requirements, mental, moral and physical, called for in a candidate for the important position of Acting Midshipman in the United States Navy. Quite as vividly can I recall the intense mental strain of the long and searching examinations, by first the Board of Surgeons and then the Academic Board, and the joyful relief upon learning that I had actually passed both these ordeals, but more than all, I remember the glow of youthful pride and the lofty resolutions with which I realized the fact that I was beginning what I expected to be a life career in the noble profession of arms, when having procured at the purser's store a regulation uniform (ready-made and dreadfully ill-fitting) I reported aboard the school-ship, and was duly furnished with a hammock and a locker, given the number of my mess and my station at a gun.

That year, for the first time, the fourth or youngest

class was quartered aboard the frigate Constitution, "Old Ironsides," as she was affectionately called. The government instead of adopting Dr. Holmes' ironical advice:

"Aye, tear her tattered ensign down, Long has it waved on high, And many an eye has danced to see That banner in the sky,"

had assigned the classic vessel to the Academy as a school-ship and winter quarters for the youngest class. A portion of her broadside battery was left in her for drill and exercise on the spar-deck, as well as most of her rigging for instruction in practical seamanship, with only enough seamen to keep the vessel in proper order and assist in teaching the "young gentlemen" to knot and splice and acquire various other accomplishments of manual dexterity belonging to the profession.

The gun deck, where had the ship been in commission as a cruiser would have been ranged at their ports some thirty or forty "great guns" (as thirty-two-pounder smooth bores were called then), was given up to study-rooms and recitation-rooms and

space for mess and class formations, as well as drill in stormy weather when the spar or upper deck was not available, while the berth deck (under the gun deck) was our dining-room by day and our dormitory at night. The class was divided into guns' crews of sixteen men and a powder-boy, each presided over by a captain selected from the class, and each crew assigned to its respective gun, study-room, mess table, boat, rack of muskets and cutlasses, and finally hooks for its hammocks on the berth deck at night, and place in the "nettings" on deck for stowage of the hammocks in the day time. The three older classes, the first, second and third, were quartered in the buildings on shore, and were likewise organized into guns' crews, separate, however, from the organization of the "youngsters" or "plebs" aboard ship. Lieut. George W. Rodgers, who as Captain Rodgers met a glorious death in battle while attacking in the Catskill, which he then commanded, the powerful Confederate battery Wagner, in front of Charleston, in 1863, had immediate charge of our class and of the ship, with several junior lieutenants to assist him. His brother, Lieutenant (now the distinguished Rear-Admiral) C. R. P. Rodgers, (both with Rhode Island blood in their veins), was commandant of midshipmen, the chief executive officer of the whole school, while at the head of the institution was Capt. George S. Blake, the tried and efficient Superintendent. And it proved fortunate for the school when the strain came so soon afterwards, that these three principal officers of the institution were just the men they were, and especially that from the fact of their northern birth they were not subjected to the specious arguments of secession, which carried away to the loss of the service and to the destruction of their own personal and professional prospects, so many of their junior officers on duty at the school.

Of course, a large proportion of the acting midshipmen, perhaps more than a third, were identified by birth, education or association with the slave states, and, doubtless, from its location and traditions, the tone of the institution itself was distinctly southern and pro-slavery as distinguished from northern or anti-slavery.

The entrance of the date of 1860 was coincident

with the height of the presidential campaign of that year, and so political discussion was quite prevalent. My recollection is that the sentiment was mainly divided between the Bell and Everett Union candidates and the southern democracy headed by Breckenridge, then Vice-President of the United States, with perhaps a few radical or Lincoln men here and there from the northern states; and when the campaign ended with the election of Lincoln, the ultra southerners began immediately to talk of secession and southern independence, reflecting in their conversation undoubtedly what they had heard at home or imbibed in letters from home, and, as the winter wore away, what with news of secession conventions and attempted withdrawals from the Union, and stilted quasi-diplomatic correspondence from commissioners of this and the other southern self-styled republic, and attempts at compromise, threats and promises and all the direful portents of the time, the school was generally in more or less of a ferment, although the routine of drills and studies went on as usual.

During this winter of '60-'61, the date of 1860, the first date to be quartered aboard the frigate Constitu-

tion as a school-ship, through the commandant of midshipmen sent an invitation to Flag Officer Charles Stewart to visit and inspect the old ship, in which he had won such renown nearly fifty years before. This venerable officer was then living in retirement in New Jersey, having attained the great age of more than eighty years, and it was deemed a graceful compliment to ask this veteran of four wars aboard his old ship, devoted as she was to the new use of a training school for officers of a generation almost two removes from his own. He had first entered the navy as a lieutenant in 1798, after an experience of several years in the merchant service, during which he rose from cabin boy to commander of a ship at the age of twenty. He had thus seen service in the troubles with France at the close of the last century, in the war with Tripoli, in the war with Great Britain in 1812, and in the Mexican War, and was destined to survive the greatest of all, the war between the States, 1861-1865, for he lived until 1869, when, at the age of ninety-one, he died a rear admiral on the retired list.

He is probably best known to this generation as the maternal grandfather of Mr. Parnell, who for several years has been such a conspicuous figure in English politics, but in 1860 he was known to the navy and the country as the brilliant commander of the Constitution which had captured in February, 1815, the two British men-o'-war, Cyane and Levant, and it was on the forty-sixth anniversary of that engagement and capture that he was expected in his old age to walk again the scene of his glorious victory the quarter-deck of "Old Ironsides." The infirmities of his old age disappointed our hopes, and he wrote a graceful letter declining the invitation, but it is none the less an interesting recollection that young officers who now in the last decade of the nineteenth century are among the commanders of such ships as constitute our present navy, and who are still in the prime of life, should have exchanged courtesies with a veteran captain who began his naval career before the close of the eighteenth century.

Towards the early spring of 1861, one after another of the southern acting midshipmen, sometimes several at a time, resigned by permission of their parents and went south. After the semi-annual examination in February, 1861, quite a number resigned,

who were permitted to do so by the Navy Department, in order to escape dismissal in consequence of failure to pass the examination, and some of these latter went south. Finally, when Fort Sumter was attacked and surrendered, there was quite a flight southward, and I distinctly remember a fire-eating young Virginian saying about this time with a fine burst of indigenous eloquence, that "Robert Anderson had damned himself to everlasting infamy by inaugurating civil war," entirely ignoring the somewhat important fact that Major Anderson, in charge of a government fort, had had his flag insulted, his position threatened by batteries mounted pretty much all around him, except at sea, and finally submitted to a general bombardment, before firing a shot or beginning any sort of hostilities. But such was the logic of the day, and my young friend soon after went south, and was duly shot in defence of "southern rights."

It was an exciting and trying period for us all. "Confidence" we are told "is a plant of slow growth in aged bosoms," but between high-spirited lads bound together in a common pursuit and with a future

in common, friendships are quickly formed, and what seems to them to be permanent sympathy, springs up as quickly as Jonah's gourd. Even when our comrades one after another left us, fully expecting to go into a war threatened against us, we parted more in sorrow than in anger.

About the time of the fall of Fort Sumter, the authorities began to realize that Annapolis was rather a dangerous place for a government institution. was in the heart of a country largely, almost universally, in sympathy with the secessionists, easily accessible to armed vessels from the Chesapeake, commanded by surrounding heights, and quite defenceless on the side towards Baltimore against a determined attack of even a large mob. Perhaps solicitude for the safety of the sacred "Old Ironsides" was the prevailing sentiment. She was moored fast to a wooden pier leading from the Naval Academy yard, was aground except at high tide, and, as I have said, was stripped of her armament except a few guns for drill, and without any crew except the few seamen and the class of green young officers. It was also loudly proclaimed among the fire-eaters

that the secessionists would promptly seize her as the "nursery of the future southern navy." In consequence, Captain Blake promptly went to work transporting guns and ammunition from Fort Severn on shore and putting them in position on board the Constitution, and we youngsters felt as if we were really naval officers in earnest as we placed shot and stands of grape alongside each broadside gun; and when each gun's crew in turn was detailed to go on watch all night to look out for the expected attack. I am quite sure that there was a common determination among us all that no body of men should be permitted to capture the vessel without a desperate struggle. Suspended in the library on shore we had seen the black flag with the white letters forming the gallant Lawrence's legend, hoisted on board the Chesapeake in her fight with the Shannon, and whether from north or south, we felt bound by his dying injunction, "Don't give up the ship!"

For a fortnight we were thus on the watch for an actual attempt to capture the old *Constitution*, but though we occasionally saw indications of such an intention and heard of various plans for such an en-

terprise, nothing serious took place. Of course our studies and exercises were more or less interrupted, and a great deal of excitement existed.

On the 19th of April, the day of the attack on the Massachusetts troops by the mob in Baltimore, we heard of the secession of Virginia, which seemed to assure the threatened Civil War, and on the 21st of that month we saw early in the morning down the bay, off Annapolis, the steamer Maryland, loaded with troops of the Eighth regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers. These troops, under command of Brig.-Gen. Benj. F. Butler, on their arrival at Havre de Grace, en route for Washington, had found the bridge burned, and so had seized the steamer and proceeded to Annapolis. A little later in the day she came alongside the Constitution. All of the midshipmen except fourteen were marched ashore, bag and baggage, to the Naval Academy yard, and two companies of the Massachusetts Eighth, viz.: the Salem Zouaves and the Allen Guards, were transferred from the Maryland and detailed to the Constitution to assist in getting her afloat and out of danger. With the timely help of these improvised man-o'-warsmen (and indeed many of them were seafaring men from Newburyport and Marblehead, Salem and thereabouts), and with the Maryland tugging at us with a hawser, we worked hard all day, and finally got the old frigate out into the channel of the Severn River—only to run aground again that night at low tide. Those of us who were retained on board thought (and I must admit hoped) that studies were over, the school broken up, and that we were off on a cruise as actual instead of acting midshipmen.

I remember that early in the evening of this day the Maryland got hard and fast aground, and that she reported herself as short of provisions, and that I was sent in charge of a boat load of barrels of beef and pork from the Constitution and pulled alongside the stranded transport for the purpose of delivering the provisions to the commanding officer. There were about a thousand troops on board, and they seemed to my eyes, accustomed to the "taut" discipline and rigid order of a man-of-war, a disorganized mob. It seemed impossible to induce any of these hungry volunteers to help get the food in-

tended for them out of the launch and aboard the Maryland, and at length my own men "parbuckled" the barrels to her deck; then it was only after considerable difficulty that I found any one who seemed to know whereabouts on board I could find General Butler's headquarters, so as to report to him that I had brought the needed supplies, so utterly without anything like organization or discipline seemed the noisy, dirty crowd.

It is curious to reflect that during the next three or four years these raw militiamen and hundreds of thousands like them, became, in the actual experience of campaigning, the equals, if not the superiors, of any veteran soldiery in the world.

Soon after the circumstance above mentioned, the steamer Boston came in with the famous New York Seventh regiment, and landed them in the yard of the Naval Academy, and I was told afterwards that while there this "crack" regiment engaged in a competitive drill with the Naval School Battalion of Acting Midshipmen, and were compelled to acknowledge the latter their superiors in some features of the drill, quite valuable testimony we all thought to

the thoroughness of the training to which we had been subjected, even in a collateral branch of our profession.

With a great deal more "kedging" and "warping," and especially with the assistance of an opportune tug-boat that came into the harbor, we finally got to a suitable anchorage in Chesapeake Bay, where we lay for about a week, our detail of fourteen youngsters standing watch as midshipmen at night, and pulling and hauling and making ourselves generally useful all day.

During this week several steamers came in with volunteers, who were landed at Annapolis. Among them I recall the *Coatzacolcos*, with the first detachment of the First Rhode Island Regiment. I remember taking a boat from our ship aboard this vessel and bringing Governor Sprague back aboard the *Constitution* to confer with our commanding officer.

During this week that we lay down the bay off Annapolis we knew nothing of what was going on ashore or where we were going next, but were full of the excitement of the opening war. The arriving troops meanwhile were encamped in the naval school grounds, and from thence forwarded to Washington.

About ten o'clock one morning the midshipman on watch aboard the Constitution saw a steamer coming towards us from the direction of Baltimore, apparently loaded with troops. We supposed that the long expected attack on the "Old Ironsides" was at hand, especially as we noticed great guns apparently manned and "run out" aboard of her. The drum beat to quarters. Our fraction of a crew was stationed at the few guns, the midshipmen at the small boat howitzers on the poop deck, and the Massachusetts Volunteers, armed with muskets and with boarding-pikes at hand, were drawn up on the quarter-deck to "repel boarders." Our guns were run out and we were all ready to open fire, when some one on board the approaching steamer sang out, "We are friends!" Next came the inquiry what government held possession of Annapolis, to which Captain Rodgers replied, "The only government I acknowledge," which reply elicited great enthusiasm aboard both vessels, the stranger proving to be a government vessel with troops, and the party who hailed us so lustily turning out to be our excellent chaplain of the Naval School.

After hovering off the mouth of the Severn River for several days more, during which time the yard and buildings of the Academy were given up to the uses of the army, and the midshipmen who remained on shore were moved on board the *Constitution*, we proceeded to New York, and thence were towed through the Sound to Newport.

How well I remember our arrival in Narragansett Bay! On a fine spring morning, as we glided in by Beaver Tail and rounded the mole of Fort Adams we were met and welcomed by a perfect fleet of small boats, and as we came to anchor Captain Rodgers recognized a middle-aged gentleman and two young ladies in a row-boat near the ship as acquaintances. He hailed them, and referring to the political question of universal interest at the time inquired, "How are the ladies of Newport?" The gentleman replied without the least hesitation, "The ladies are for Union,—to a man."

Meantime the library, the chemical apparatus, astronomical instruments, and such other material of

the school as could be moved had been shipped from Annapolis to Newport, and such of the professors and other attachés as remained in the service arrived about the same time that we did, and the school was set up in its new location, partly on board the Constitution and partly in Fort Adams, which had been given up for the purpose. The professors and officers occupied the quarters of the artillery officers in the fort, and the books, instruments, arms, etc., which had been brought from Annapolis were arranged as well as they could be in the casemates and barracks of the old fortress, where were also improvised recitation rooms, offices, etc. The parade and terre pleine inside the walls took the place of the old Academy grounds as our field for exercises and drills, and we were at liberty in our hours of recreation to roam about the government domain surrounding the fort, but within well-defined bounds. The acting midshipmen lived aboard ship, however, and went ashore in boats for their recitations, drills, etc. During these changes and within a short time after our arrival the first, second, and finally the third classes had, one after the other, been detached from

the Academy and ordered into active service aboard different vessels on the blockade, and then our class, the date of 1860, which after the annual examination in June became the third class, reduced by resignations and other casualties to seventy-six members, constituted the entire naval school, and thus it continued all the summer and until the new class, or date of 1861, one hundred and twenty-one strong, reported for examination in September. We tried hard to induce the Secretary of the Navy to order us also to sea, but he, regarding our class as all that stood between the school and its entire abolition, wisely refused our application, and as no vessel could be spared for the usual summer practice cruise abroad, we were feign to content ourselves with a modified summer routine of studies and practical exercises in seamanship and gunnery, and such enjoyment of Newport society as the exigencies of discipline allowed.

I should not omit to mention the reception of the General Assembly soon after our arrival. Being convened at their May session, Captain Rodgers invited the members of the State government to a luncheon

on board the old ship, and many attended. We youngsters were duly drawn up on the quarter-deck to receive the dignitaries, and we were addressed and our patriotism stimulated by some of the eloquent legislators of that day, after which they were entertained in the cabin, and then sent ashore in man-o'war boats amid the noise of a broadside salute. Nor should I forget the occasional "hops" aboard, which were attended by the beauty and chivalry not only of Newport, but of Providence and other cities and towns; nor yet the excursion boats, which brought crowds of sight-seers throughout the summer to inspect the historic "Old Ironsides" and the working of the school aboard. But I can, even at this distance of time, recall our annoyance when being stared at by these excursionists as if we were some strange kind of wild animals, and the mixture of disgust and merriment with which we one day overheard a question addressed to one of the officers by an old lady from the country whom he was showing about the ship during our dining hour, in reference to the midshipmen, "Do you give them meat?" Whether the good old dame judged from our youthful appearance

that we ought to be restricted to a *milk* diet, or that from the savage nature of the profession for which we were training we ought to be brought up on rum and gunpowder, was never discovered.

On the 21st of September, 1861, our class moved ashore, abandoning the ship to the new class of the date of 1861. The government had rented the Atlantic House, one of the large summer hotels (since torn down to give place for private residences), on the corner of Pelham street and "the Avenue." It had been fitted up for the occupation of the school, being large enough to furnish quarters, offices, recitation rooms, and accommodations for not only the third class of midshipmen, but for most of the officers and employés. Here we took up our residence after a year aboard ship (two midshipmen to each room), and after so long an experience of a hammock on the berth deck for sleeping, a small locker for wardrobe, and a common wash-room, with tin basins, for toilet purposes, it seemed something like luxury to have a narrow iron bedstead, a bureau, and a wash-stand apiece, and two wooden chairs and a table in common, all in a comparatively comfortable apartment

with doors and windows, even if the room-mates did have to make their own beds and take turns keeping the room in order for daily inspection.

Touro Park, just in front of the hotel, and the streets surrounding it, comprised the "bounds," outside of which we could not go without permission, and for drills and exercises requiring more space we would be marched to fields in the outskirts of the city, and then "marched back again" to the Atlantic House.

October 14, 1861, there arrived at the school a tall, gawky youngster about fifteen years old, accompanied by his father, the well-known Prince de Joinville, who many years before had come into Newport harbor in command of a French fleet during the reign of his father, King Louis Phillippe. This youth was the Duc de Penthievre, who had been granted permission by our government (with which his father was an earnest sympathizer in its internecine struggle), to get his education as a naval officer at our Naval Academy. He was duly entered as Midshipman Pierre d'Orleans in our, the third, class and was so borne on the Navy Register until he was graduated. He re-

signed his commission as Ensign, May 30, 1864, to enter the naval service of his cousin, the King of Portugal. He was assigned to a room, with a room-mate, subjected to all the discipline of the school like the rest, except that being, of course, a Roman Catholic, he had special permission to be absent from bounds from Saturday night until Monday morning. This interval he passed with his tutor, an accomplished Ex-Capitaine de Vaisseau in the French Navy, who lived in a house just out of the "bounds," which he had rented for the purpose. "Pete Dorleens," as we called him, had but a sorry time of it at first, for a French Prince Royal was considered particularly fair game for the pranks of free-born American midshipmen, and he got perhaps rather more than his due share of the "hazing" to which "plebs" were in those days liable, but in a little while his invincible good nature and his gentle, patient conduct. and especially his strong class feeling won the regard of all his classmates, and "Pete" was voted a firstrate fellow by common consent. Years afterwards, when I called upon him at the palace of his uncle. Dom Pedro, the Emperor of Brazil, in Rio de Janeiro.

where he was a lieutenant aboard a Portuguese mano'-war, his conversation was mostly about his old
classmates at Newport, and he assured me that if he
had been at liberty to follow his own inclinations he
would have remained in the United States service.
He is now a member of the United States Naval
Academy Graduates Association, which meets every
year at Annapolis, where I hope some time to meet
him and spin a yarn about old times at the school.

About the beginning of November, 1861, fifteen members of the third class, which number was afterwards increased to about twenty-five, received permission to attempt the feat of covering the balance of the prescribed four years' course at the school, so as to graduate in three years from entering instead of four. Their object was by extra exertion to get into active service one year earlier than otherwise they would do. An "advanced third class" was formed of these. Extra studies were added to the regular ones in anticipation of the curriculum. Extra recitations and study hours and very hard work enabled most of them to succeed in passing into the first class the following summer (1862), instead of into the second

class, so that after the annual examination in June of that year there was a first, second and third class in the school, and in the following autumn, when the date of 1862, numbering 217 members, entered and formed the fourth class, the organization was complete, just as it had existed before the removal. The date of 1861 was removed to the Atlantic House, joining there the date of 1860, and the younger class took possession of the Constitution and of the Santee, an old sailing frigate, which had been attached to the school to accommodate the increased numbers, now grown from seventy-six midshipmen, all told, in the summer of 1861, to over four hundred in the autumn of 1862. Of these, twenty-one of the date of 1860 were first The balance of that date (with some class men. "advanced" additions from the date of 1861), were second class men, the date of 1861 were third class men, and the new comers of the date of 1862 constituted the fourth class.

In May, 1862, the second class having completed the course of that year became the first class, numbering, as I have said, twenty-one members. In the regular order of things they would have been second class men, and having been two years at the school, entitled to a leave of absence until the beginning of the next academic year in September, but it will be remembered that the summer before, when in regular course they would have been sent to sea on a practice cruise, the department had had no vessel to spare from the blockade for that service. We were told, therefore, that we must give up our leave of absence, and instead we were ordered to the Brooklyn Navy Yard to assist in fitting out the old sloop of war, John Adams, and bring her around to Newport for a detail from the younger classes and a subsequent cruise. Accordingly, after a few days at the navy yard, spent in bending sails, setting up rigging, receiving aboard stores, and generally getting ready for sea, on the 30th day of May, 1862, the sloop of war John Adams, which had first seen service in the Tripolitan War in 1803, commenced the practice cruise of 1862, Lieut. Stephen B. Luce, commanding.

The "log" for that day, which each midshipman was required to keep, opens thus:

"At 8 A. M. the tug-boat *Portland* made fast to us and towed us from our berthalongside the dock, and, after getting into the stream the powder-boat came alongside and delivered our powder. Afterwards we were towed through Hell Gate to just off Sand's Point, Long Island, and let go anchor.

"The midshipmen and crew were exercised in loosing and furling in the evening."

And the next day, at 6.30 P. M., or to speak by the card, "at five bells in the second dog watch," "got under way and stood to the eastward. Crossed royal yards and made all plain sail. From 8 P. M. to midnight all plain sail."

For several days we worked leisurely through the Sound towards Newport, exercising in all the ordinary details of handling a ship under sail, the midshipmen taking their turns standing watch as "officer of the deck" until June 3d, when the "log" records: "8.30 passed Beaver Tail light. 9, called all hands 'Bring ship to anchor.' 9.30, took in all sail and brought to in Newport harbor, off Fort Adams, in seven fathoms water; veered to twenty-five fathoms starboard chain. 6 to 8 p. m., received some spare

ammunition boxes from the Constitution. Midshipmen from the second and third classes came aboard."

(It is indicative of the feeling of superiority of *First class* midshipmen towards the junior classes that the spare ammunition boxes are mentioned before the second and third classes in the log.)

On the 6th of June we took our departure from Newport and proceeded down the coast, "working ship" and performing the various duties and carrying out the usual routine of a man-o'-war for ten days until we arrived in Hampton Roads. After a few days' stay here, during which we sailed up the York River to the recently evacuated Yorktown, where we went ashore, and in company with officers of the army inspected the formidable works erected by General McClellan for its reduction, we set sail again and stood to the southward. But even on this summer cruise studies were not suspended. The entries in the log from day to day show that during the day while one "watch" (or half) the midshipmen were on deck, knotting, splicing or attending to various duties as officers of the deck, of the forecastle, etc., the other watch was "at school," i. e., below, studying or reciting.

On the third of July we worked into the harbor of Port Royal, S. C., the headquarters of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, and anchored near the flag-ship, the United States steam frigate Wabash, flying the flag of Rear Admiral Du Pont, commanding the squadron. A visit aboard of her disclosed to our youthful eyes our first sight of a firstrate man-o'-war in perfect condition. At that time the Wabash, a steam screw frigate of over three thousand tons burthen, rated at forty-eight guns, but carrying fifty odd, commanded and officered by the flower of the American navy, was perhaps the most perfect specimen of a war vessel in the world. As we youngsters promenaded her spacious decks and noticed every man of her more than five hundred crew in faultless trim and under perfect discipline, trained for either harmless parade or desperate battle, with every detail of her rigging, to the smallest rope yarn, in place; with her holy-stoned decks and paint and bright work so clean that a cambric handkerchief might have met any of them on equal terms, we took new pride in our profession, and new resolutions to emulate our seniors, who directed and governed this splendid specimen of a man-o'-war.

Admiral Du Pont entertained the first class on board the flag-ship, July 4, 1862, and next day the old John Adams weighed anchor and sailed for Newport again, and after a week at sea anchored off Fort Adams. After a few days here, during which we sent a part of the younger midshipmen back aboard the Constitution and received on board the John Adams an equal number of substitutes, we sailed again, and for the next six weeks we cruised about Long Island Sound, exercising in practical seamanship and gunnery, and probably in the course of that six weeks we did pretty much everything with the John Adams that could be done with a sailing ship. When we got back to Newport we found to our joyful surprise that after all, the first class were to be granted a leave of absence for a few weeks, and (to the best of my recollection) nobody declined the opportunity.

The academic year, 1862-3, saw the school at Newport in full operation. The four classes made a total of more than four hundred midshipmen, and when the youngsters from the ships came ashore to join the older classes at the Atlantic House for drill in the fields outside Newport the battalion made

quite a respectable force, and it was one of the features in those days of our great Rhode Island watering place to see the incipient naval officers of the United States returning from their infantry exercise, dancing down Bellevue avenue at a double quick, on their way back to the Atlantic House.

In May, 1863, that part of the date of 1860, the date which had held the school together, which had succeeded in crowding the four-year course into three years, was graduated. The venerable Edward Everett, of the Board of Visitors, delivered an impressive oration in an old church in Newport, and the fortunate twenty-one (counting our French class-mate) received their certificates of graduation, or diplomas, and bade farewell to the Naval Academy. All were at once promoted and ordered into active service. The following autumn the balance of the date of 1860 was likewise graduated and its members detached for duty in various vessels, and a portion of the date of 1861 became the first class, and the school went on its work with all the classes represented.

This completes my personal reminiscences of the old school, as after a short leave of absence I went

or durus pater until a quarter of a century afterwards, when I chanced to be at Annapolis, and passed an afternoon looking around the grounds. I found them much enlarged and improved, but I found essentially the old school, doing the old work of teaching the coming officers of the naval service to be good seamen, and good gunners, and good navigators, and at the same time good citizens and straightforward, upright gentlemen, with much addition of steam and electricity and other needs to the equipment in advanced acquirements of modern naval scientific officers.

The rest of the connection of the Academy with Rhode Island is soon told. In 1865, about the beginning of June, the date of 1861 graduated from Newport, and constituted the only class which, as a whole, began and ended its academic career on Rhode Island soil. Its members entered the autumn after the school arrived and pitched its tents in Newport, and graduated just before it set out for its return voyage to Annapolis.

After the annual examination in June, 1865, the war being over, the Navy Department had ships to

spare for the summer practice cruise, and so the sailing sloops of war Macedonian and Marion, the steamers Winnepec and Marblehead, and the yacht America (which then belonged to the navy), were detailed to the Naval Academy, and aboard of them during June and July were placed the date of 1862 (now the first class), and the date of 1864 (now the third class), while the date of 1863 (now the second class), took the usual summer leave of absence, and the date of 1865 had not yet entered, not being required to report before September.

The practice squadron just mentioned confined its operations to our own coast, and during the summer exercised in Long Island Sound very much as the John Adams had done in 1862, only on a larger and more comprehensive scale, and in the early days of September worked down the coast and up Chesapeake Bay, landing its crews of young officers at the naval school yard in Annapolis in time to begin the academic year of 1865 at the original naval school, where, meantime, all the material of the establishment had been transported. One complete course of the school, however, has been passed in our State.

Rhode Island has furnished an asylum for this important government institution during a trying time, when all organized government institutions seemed in danger of chaos. Rhode Island may, therefore, claim a truly intimate connection with the United States Naval Academy, and I make no doubt that you, not only as citizens of the State, but as survivors of those who camped at the Academy on your march to the front in 1861, will have received with some interest, as you certainly have borne with courteous patience, these recollections of one of its graduates.